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JERRY: (FADING IN) I've got the report on the first case, Jim.

JIM: That's fine, Jerry. Sit down here beside me and we'll go over it.

JERRY: Okay. I think I got everything filled in.

BESS: (OFF) Oh, Jim ---

JIM: Yes, Bess?

BESS: (FADING IN) Did you enjoy your lunch, Jim?

JIM: Hmm? -- Oh, you bet I did, Bess. It sure hit the spot. But -- oh -- I wasn't awful hungry. I ate a big breakfast you know.

BESS: Why, Jim, you've really touched your food.

JIM: Oh, I was hungry, Bess.

BESS: Jim, honey, you've got to eat more. Doctor Peters says you must eat something.

JIM: I'll make up for it at supper. You just wait and see.

BESS: Wouldn't you eat some of the yeasties?

JIM: I've tried them. I just can't get them down and I'll eat them for supper.

BESS: Well, I'll make you some then.

JIM: Hey, Bess, wouldn't it be a lot easier to bring me food to me on a tray, like I did at the hospital? I could sit at the table with you and Jerry from now on.

BESS: (EMPHATICALLY) It's not the least bit of trouble. And Doctor Peters said you must get all the rest you can.

JERRY: (HARSHLY) You gotta rest in bed, Jim. If you don't rest like the Doc told you, you can get yourself hurt back in places?

JIM: But all I do is sit here in this chair all day, long with my eyes bandaged up so I'm blind as a bat. I get more tired doin' nothing than I would if I put in a day's work.

BESS: Why, Jim, you're never still a minute. If you weren't working with Jerry you're trying to do something else. And now you've got the Federal Commissioner coming up here today.

JIM: But I had to do it, Bess. You would let me go to the Commissioner's office, so I asked him if he wouldn't come here.

BESS: But Jerry could have gone in your place, couldn't he?

JERRY: I could not for you, Jim. When the Commissioner gets here you could tell him you don't feel like sitting on the hearing.

JIM: I'd like to have you with me today, Jerry. But after the Commissioner's come all the way up here from Wilbur Glen just so I could be present at the hearing, I reckon I'd better go through with it.

JERRY: But suppose that fellow Douglas gets caught?

BESS: Who's that, Jerry?

JERRY: John Perkins. He's the fellow that started the fire, the one we're going to hear about.

BESS: I thought you were only seeing the Commissioner about some newspaper matter, Jim. I didn't know you were going to question the man who started it. You shouldn't try to do anything like that now.

JIM: Don't you worry about me, Jess. It's only that the Commissioner has to decide about prosecution and what court the case will go to.

BESS: Of course you know best. But couldn't it wait until you got well?

JIM: It wouldn't be wise to delay it, Jess.

BESS: All right, Jim. (FADING) I'll be in the kitchen if you want me.

JIM: My head on the sick list is worse for Jess than it is for me.

JERRY: It's a good thing it doesn't happen very often.

JIM: I've always been pretty lucky. Heck, I've got no complaints coming.

JERRY: Are you comfortable, Jim?

JIM: Fine.

JERRY: Your headache all right? You said we could listen to outside now if it hurt your head.

JIM: It's all right. What time is it?

JERRY: Ten-fifteen past one.

JIM: Is it that late? The Commissioner ought to be here.

JERRY: Yeah, he said one o'clock.

JIM: Maybe he's having trouble getting out of court to bring him up here.

JERRY: He said he's on the Sheriff about it.

JIM: Who created Curless, do you know?

JERRY: The Sheriff and one of his deputies.

JIM: Did he ever say fuss about it?

JERRY: "I was pretty sore, I guess."

JIM: I wonder what court the case will go to.

JERRY: Whatever it is, I hope they give him the maximum. They oughta sock it to him plenty for starting that fire.

JIM: I know how you feel, son. But no matter what you and I think about it, we have to present the facts of the case, not our feelings about it.

JERRY: Yeah --- I get it, Jim.

JIM: I've got to depend on you to keep things running smoothly since I can't see what's going on.

JERRY: Okay.

(KNOCKING ON DOOR)

JIM: That must be the Commissioner now.

JERRY: (FADING A BIT) I'll go see.

(DOOR OPENS)

JERRY: (OFF) Hello, Commissioner. Won't you come in?

COM: (OFF NINE -- MID-LE OF BRISK, PLEASANT) Hello, Mr. Jim. Where's Jim?

(DOOR CLOSSES)

JERRY: (FADING IN) He's right now.

JIM: Hello, Commissioner. How's everything?

COM: (UP) Splendid, Jim. Splendid. How are you feeling now?

JIM: Fine as can be. Sit down. Make yourself comfortable.

COM: Thank you.

JIM: I sure do appreciate your coming all the way to here.

COM: I'm pleased to do it, Jim. It's little enough after all you've done.

JIM: We are lucky to get out of it as well as we did.

COMM: They've told me about your saving that bunch of boys from getting burned up. Jim. I think that was one of the most courageous deeds I've ever known. And we're all of us hoping you'll come out of it without any trouble.

JIM: Well, thanks. I'm sure I'll be all right in no time.

COMM: What does the Doctor say about your eyes?

JIM: Just got a little too much smoke in 'em, I guess. Nothing serious.

JERRY: We're having an eye specialist from the city next week.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) They're trying to make an invalid out of me. But they don't have much luck. I fool 'em most of the time.

COMM: That's the spirit, Jim.

JIM: Well, not about this man Cortice --

JERRY: Did you see the Sheriff, Commissioner?

COMM: I stopped by on my way here. They're bringing Cortice up immediately.

JIM: That's good.

COMM: What sort of a reason is that?

JIM: I don't know. I always figured he was pretty straight. I've known him to speak to for several years.

COMM: He's from Miller Glen, isn't he?

JERRY: Yes. He's with a wholesale grocer's firm there.

COMM: What's the evidence against him?

JIM: It's pretty clear cut, Commissioner. No question but what his cigarette started the fire.

(KNOCK AT DOOR)

JERRY: (FADING & EXIT) I'll get it

(DOOR OPENS)

SHERIFF: (OFF) Here's your man, Jerry.

JERRY: (OFF) Sure. Come on in.

SHERIFF: I'll stick around out here.

JERRY: Okay. Stop inside, Curtiss.

(DOOR CLOSSES)

JERRY: (FADING IN) This is Mr. Lewis, the U.S. Commissioner, and you know Mr. Robbins.

CURT: (FADING IN) (MIDDLE AGE, SINCERE, UNAFFECTED) Yes, Hello Mr. Robbins.

JIM: Hello, Curtiss. Have a chair.

CURT: Thanks. I'm sorry to hear about your eyes, Mr. Robbins. I hope it's nothing serious.

JIM: I'll be all right soon, I reckon.

CURT: Before you say anything there's something I want to tell you.

JIM: What is it?

CURT: They said to me I was worried that I might start a fire. Sure you had an eye test then. But they're wrong. It was my car. I couldn't control it. I've started a fire.

JIM: You don't think so?

CURT: Of course not. You don't misunderstand me. I'd be willing to pay for any reasonable amount of damage I might have caused. But it's out of the question so long as I started a big fire like that.

JIM: You believe it is?

CURT: Well, certainly. But what chance did I have in the way I was arrested for it. As if I was a criminal.

JIM: But the law requires it. Justice.

CURT: Not without some reason. It doesn't. How would you like to be hauled up by the Sheriff with no suitable explanation of any kind? What'll my neighbors think about it?

JOE: The officials are sure the Sheriff told you what the complaint was. Didn't they?

CURT: Yes, they did. But I'm a politician. There's absolutely no reason for me to be hauled up this way because I might have dropped a cigarette at the side of the road and started a brush fire.

JERRY: Brush fire?

CURT: That's what I said. You can't tell me a cigarette can start a forest fire the size of that big one you saw last autumn with a trail of cannon smoke would they tell you that?

JERRY: Anybody with a grain of common sense would have known that to drop a burning cigarette into dry brush.

JIM: Well, Jerry. I want to ask you a question. A few questions. Is it all right for me to be here, Commissioner?

JOE: Certainly, if you wish to.

JIM: You have a family, haven't you, Currier?

CURT: Yes. Wife and two boys.

JIM: How old are your boys?

CURT: One's eight and the other one's thirteen. I'm almost out of high school this year.

JIM: I'll bet you're proud of that, aren't you?

CHART: They're better, aren't they, if I do say so myself?

JIM: I reckon they are. How long have you lived in Glenview Glen?

CHART: Sixteen years.

JIM: Have you ever been home there in your life?

CHART: Yes, to visit a few times a couple of years ago.

JIM: Does your plan to settle down there now?

CHART: There's no question about it. Yes, Mr. Conway's planning to put me in the office there pretty soon, and then I want to come to travel.

JIM: Where do you go for your vacation, Chart?

CHART: Well, for the last few years, I've been going up to Glenview Lake in your national Forest.

JIM: Do any thinking of settling there in the future?

CHART: Whenever I get a chance. I wish I had more time for it.

JIM: You have no time to think of that when you're here, don't you? Do you?

CHART: Yes, I tell to my goodness all the time, and Al Farrow says it's better to be here than to be there.

JIM: They're better, aren't they, aren't they?

CHART: Sure they are. But what's the point? What's all that got to do with her life?

JIM: I'll show you, Jerry. Will you let me ask you one more thing?

JERRY: Sure, Jim. It's your order.

(BATTLE OF PAPER)

JERRY: All right. This wide red line starts near where the fire started, you see, and goes along Sunset Drive and up Cloud Peak here, then up the valley on both sides to here.

CURT: And it started from where I changed the river.

JERRY: Yep. The wind took it into this heavy stand of timber beside the road.

JIM: It doesn't matter how small a fire is. If a high wind gets behind it there's no telling what it'll do.

CURT: But I couldn't help it if there was a big fire.

JIM: No -- you couldn't. But you could help starting the fire.

JERRY: If you hadn't thrown a burning cigarette into the brush there wouldn't have been any fire for the wind to spread.

JIM: There are a couple of points on the map that are of interest now. Corral Junction. Show him where Golden Trail Tourist Camp used to be.

JERRY: All right. It was right here -- see?

JIM: It was a big camp that we burned this year. You know it's nothing left of it but the remains of the tobacco tinelaces and some scattered boards of lumber.

CURT: Or --- I see.

JIM: Since that time Palmer's Ranch was.

JERRY: That's it -- here -- see? There was a good sized house on that spot. Now there's only a few foundations and charcoal.

JIM: Several loads of cattle were burned out of there.

JERRY: And several hundred acres of timber.

THU:

EXACTLY) But the idea of burning the forest is
dangerous to so many forest fires. They've been
someday didn't think. They're like you. They never
want to start a fire. They never want to be disturbed.
But they have forest — because of their environment.
Greece — because they didn't think — and they didn't
want forest and people don't want to be needed. They're
not really in danger of, and they don't want to
that they're in the forest. For their sake, I hope
the Commission will recommend forestry. But they don't
want to have had the forest of Greece if forest, that
you owned. It'll have been given to the forest. It
can't have had the forest that was lost. The Commission
will have been. We can only try to keep such things
from happening again.

THU:

EXACTLY) I'll be happy to see you and that I've
been.

THU:

THU:

THU:

THU: But the forest is not a forest. It's a forest of
the forest and the forest is a forest of the forest.
The forest is not a forest. It's a forest of the forest.
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